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BILL IN HOUSE TO TIGHTEN OVERSIGHT OVER NGOs

The government on Wednesday introduced the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha

The proposed amendment introduces a new Chapter IIIA to the FCRA Act, which provides for the creation of a powerful new authority that can seize and manage the assets of non-profits that lose their licences. The new authority would have provisional or permanent control over the assets

The Opposition has criticised it as a **dangerous** step that could allow the government to exert excessive control over non-profits

16,000 associations are registered under the FCRA Act and receive around **₹22,000 cr**

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai responded to the Opposition's charge, saying it is **indeed dangerous** for those involved in forced religious conversions using foreign funds | **P11**

PUBS CAUTIONED

Verify age before serving liquor: HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

EXPRESSING serious concern over breweries and similar establishments in urban spaces that are permitting the entry of minor children and serving liquor to them without verifying their age, the Karnataka High Court directed that managements must initiate rigorous age verification, whether through Aadhaar or other valid identification, at the entry.

Further verification should follow when liquor is ordered by persons who appear youthful or underage, the HC said in a major verdict on Wednesday. **P3**

We've borrowed, but budget not debt-ridden: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Legislative Assembly on Wednesday approved Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's 17th State Budget for 2026-27 with an outlay of Rs 4.48 lakh crore, even as the CM asserted that the borrowing is within the framework of FRBM Act, while legislators from the opposition BJP and JDS walked out of the House, terming it an "empty vessel" budget.

Hitting back, Siddaramaiah claimed that his budget is a full pot, not an empty vessel, for the people of the state.

CONTINUED ON: P4

India is not a 'dalaal' nation like Pakistan: Govt at all-party meet

US using Pak since 1981, says Jaishankar; Govt's response unsatisfactory, says Opposition

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Congress MPs Mukul Wasnik and Tariq Anwar, Samajwadi Party MP Dharmendra Yadav and others leave after the meeting | P11

PREETHA NAIR & RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE government on Wednesday told an all-party meeting India can't go after every country and act as a *dalaal* (broker) in reference to the reported mediation of Pakistan in the ongoing West Asia conflict.

The meeting convened at the Parliament complex was attended by key Union ministers and several Opposition members, barring those from the Trinamool Congress, which boycotted the meeting.

Chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the all-party meet began with a primary briefing on the energy crisis and the measures being taken by India. Members were told about India's preparedness to address the challenges as well as diplomatic efforts to protect the interest of the nation.

Responding to the Opposition's charge that Pakistan has been performing the mediator's role while India remains a mute spectator, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that Pakistan has been 'used' by the US since 1981, and there is nothing new in its mediation efforts in the matter, said sources. "We are not a *dalaal* nation," Jaishankar told the meeting.

On the Opposition's queries on the phone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, Jaishankar said the PM has conveyed that the war in West Asia must end soon, as it is hurting everyone.

The Opposition, however, said the government's answers were "unsatisfactory". Lashing out at the government, Congress's Tariq Anwar told this paper there should be a debate on the situation in the Lok Sabha under Rule 193 and in the Rajya Sabha under Rule 176.

Attendees

Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, S Jaishankar, JP Nadda, Nirmala Sitharaman & Kiren Rijiju, and Oppn leaders Tariq Anwar, Mukul Wasnik, Dharmendra Yadav & Sasmit Patra attended

The meeting was unsatisfactory. The Opposition's primary demand is for a debate in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on the West Asia situation

Congress leader Tariq Anwar

Gone too far: UN chief

Calling on the US and Israel to end the fighting with Iran, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Wednesday said the "war has gone too far and it has broken past limits"

Iran junks US plan, sets terms for peace

AGENCIES @ Dubai

IRAN on Wednesday dismissed an American plan to pause the war in West Asia, issuing its own counterproposal instead, as it launched more attacks on Israel and Arab countries.

Two officials from Pakistan described the 15-point US proposal broadly, saying it addressed sanctions relief, a rollback of Iran's nuclear programme, limits on missiles and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped.

Iran issued it's own counter-plan via state TV, which includes a halt to killings of its officials, means to make sure no other war is waged against it, reparations for the war, the end of hostilities and Iran's "exercise of sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz."

DAY 26 | WAR WATCH

"Iran will end the war when it decides to do so and when its own conditions are met," Iran's Press TV quoted the official as saying.

To the earlier white flag of the US, the official said the "US is talking to itself".

The death toll from the war has risen to more than 1,500 in Iran, nearly 1,100 in Lebanon, 16 in Israel and 13 US military members, as well as a number of civilians on land and sea in the Gulf region. Analysts, however, pointed out that the arrival of more US troops in the Gulf and fresh missile strikes between Iran and Israel suggested chances of escalation remained. On Day 26 of the conflict, Iran fired cruise missiles at the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, warning of further launches if US advances anywhere near it. **P14**

MODIFIED UDAN SCHEME

REGIONAL AIR CONNECTIVITY GETS ₹28,840 CRORE PUSH

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved measures to expand regional air connectivity and modernise the country's immigration system with a combined outlay of ₹30,640 crore.

The Cabinet cleared the modified UDAN scheme with a total outlay of ₹28,840 crore for a 10-year period from April 1 to expand regional air connectivity.

Under the new scheme, around 100 new airports would be built in challenge mode with a budgetary support of ₹12,159 crore. Besides, the Centre will provide 80–90% viability gap funding to airlines for operating UDAN routes at an estimated cost of ₹10,043 crore over the ten-year period.

Other measures include the construction of 200 modern helipads at a cost of ₹3,661 crore. Helicopter services are expected to enhance connectivity in the Himalayan region, North-East, island territories and aspirational districts, the government said. The current UDAN scheme ends this year.

In another deicision, the Cabinet approved a five-year extension of the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme, committing ₹1,800 crore to modernise and secure the country's immigration system through March 2031.

New climate targets approved

The Cabinet approved India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the period 2031 to 2035

India has committed to reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 47% by 2035 from the 2005 level

Will aim to achieve 60% cumulative installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2035

Will create a carbon sink of **3.5 to 4 billion** tonnes through forest cover

SETBACK FOR NIRAV

LONDON COURT REJECTS HIS PLEA

The London High Court's King's Bench Division on Wednesday rejected the fugitive diamond trader's petition to reopen proceedings against his extradition order | **P11**

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BALANCED ADVANTAGE FUNDS
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